Using Technology To Capture, Report And Analyze Outcome Information For Multiple Purposes

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Executive Summary

An outcomes measurement may be categorized in 4 areas: inputs, activity, output, and outcomes. Inputs are the resources used such as staff and funds. Outputs are the number of clients served. The benefits received by the clients describe the outcomes. Outcomes may be measured through indicators, some of which are short-term, some are long-term. Legal Services of Eastern Missouri is developing and tweaking the outcome systems used by several projects in the program.

LSEM has setup outcome measurement systems for four projects: Children's Legal Alliance (CLA), Lasting Solutions, Mortgage Counseling, and United Way. In developing the outcome measurement for these projects, we used a variety of different setups. We have modified the Kemps Case management system to capture outcome information in two of the projects. For one of the projects, we developed a separate database in Access and linked it to the case management system.

The outcome system must be proactive instead of reactive. In the current projects, we developed the outcome measurement to satisfy grant conditions. After a little experience, it appears more thought and planning on what information would be needed and how to gather it. Outcome measurement systems should be carefully planned and not set up only for the current situation. The system should take into consideration future expectations so the system could be more adaptable to other grants or conditions. Careful thought and planning are required for long-term results.

An outcomes measurement may be categorized in 4 areas: inputs, activity, output, and outcomes. Inputs are the resources used such as staff and funds. Activities are the interventions attempted, such as obtaining an Order of Protection for the abused partner or obtaining more time to move for a housing client or getting a child back in the education system. Outputs are the number of clients served. Outcomes are the benefits received by the clients. Outcomes may be measured through indicators, some of which are short-term, some are long-term. If an abused person learns through the process of obtaining an Order of Protection, that abuse is not considered normal behavior; the cycle of violence may be broken. This interaction may alter one's behavior which in turn will improve the life style. Legal Services of Eastern Missouri is developing and tweaking the outcome systems used by several projects in the program. We are still in the testing and evaluation process.

Setup of Systems

LSEM is currently working on fine tuning outcome systems in 4 projects: Lasting Solutions (Order of Protections), Children Legal Alliance, Mortgage Counseling, and United Way. LSEM's outcome gathering systems are set up in combination with our case management system and separate databases that are linked to the case management system. The tables in the case management system are linked to these additional tables to capture the information, which allow access to any inputted information. With the gathered information, we are able to ascertain what type of problems our clients are having and how our assistance is benefiting the client and to what degree. For example we can now evaluate how many people remain in a safe environment after an Order of Protection is obtained; how many families remain in a safe

environment after a divorce or are new cycles started; and do children remain in school or do they have other problems.

Modification of Case Management System

Each of the projects has a different level of modification, some simple, some more complex by integrating several software packages.

When designing our outcomes gathering system for Mortgage Counseling and Children's Legal Alliance, we modified the Kemps Case Management system by adding a separate intake/outcome screen for each project. In these outcome systems, a new table was created and added to our case management system. The Mortgage Counseling and Children's Legal Alliance unit input information into these separate intake/outcome screens at various times during the case cycle. The information is gathered and saved through the case management system. This type of setup has proven useful in gathering outcome information. We are able to create data fields and reports that are specific to our needs for a particular grant.

In contrast, the Lasting Solutions outcome system was developed using a separate software package, Access, and linked to the case management system by the case number. This database requires the user to open a database separate from the case management system. This setup allows for reports to be generated either by gender and outcome or other information that is gathered at the time of intake and at the time the outcome information is gathered. Reports are generated to the various grantors in the fashion and setup desired. This outcome system is saved under a different database than the case management system.

In the United Way outcome system, we depend only on information gathered through the case management system. The information gathered is basic information such as address, race, gender, type of problem. At the end of the case cycle, a main benefit is chosen by the case

handler. The main benefit is a list that was generated by the case handlers. We are currently working on fine tuning the Main Benefit portion of Kemps Caseworks to better provide this grantor with additional outcome measurements.

Recommendation to Other Legal Services

A project assessment tool such as an outcomes measurement system is essential to nonprofit programs and could be used effectively to obtain needed information.   An outcomes measurement system is essential to providing insight into what services clients need and how effective the project is. In developing the outcome measurement system, careful thought and consideration should be given. The system should be proactive instead of reactive. A study should be conducted regarding what information may be needed and what or how to gather the information. If careful planning and thought is put into the plan, the system may be adapted to future uses and not narrowly confined to the information needed for a current grant.

Objective or Subjective

Objective is defined as information that is uninfluenced by emotions or personal prejudices, is based on observable phenomena and presented factually. In essence, objective information is information where the numbers or stats or things that the database might "add up". In contrast, s*ubjective* is defined as proceeding from or taking place in a person's mind, particular to a given person.

Using the above definition, much of the information is objective as the information revolves around a number. However, for some of the grants, the information is also subjective because the information regarding how the clients benefited from the services is determined by the staff member. A main benefit is chosen by the case handler with no input from the client about what was the most important benefit.

Whether the information would be subjective or objective was not considered at the time of implementation. This area needs more tweaking and/or more thought as an outcome system is an ongoing project. As more is learned and experienced, the system must be readjusted or changed.

Data Definition and How Tracked

Children's Legal Alliance (CLA)

Data for the study is collected at multiple times during and after representation of the client. The information is separated onto three different pages of the database. The first, the baseline page, is completed by CLA staff immediately after the initial interview with the client. The purpose of collecting baseline information is to document the types of educational and mental health issues that clients are facing at the time they seek help from CLA. The second, services obtained page, tracks the types of educational, mental health, and other community services CLA assists clients and their families in accessing. In addition, notes are made of any systemic problems that were identified during the course of a case. The data for this page is entered at the time that CLA closes the client's case. Finally, the educational progress page is designed to measure whether CLA representation is helping clients to attain lasting change with respect to their educational performance. Specifically, CLA tracks whether clients are enrolled in or completing educational programs, making progress in attendance, the number of classes they are passing, and whether their incidence of behavior reports is decreasing. We track clients' progress on these measures at four different times: the baseline semester (the semester before the client requests CLA assistance), the referral resolution date semester (the semester that CLA completes advocacy), the first full semester after the case is closed, and the second full semester after the case is closed.

Mortgage Counseling

The information inputted for Mortgage Counseling is basically information that is needed to comply with grant requirements. Information is gathered at the end of the case cycle. We are still experimenting and evaluating how we can improve this outcome system. Along with this information, we also use the main benefit screen of the Kemps case management system. At the end of the case cycle, a main benefit is chosen by the case handler.

Lasting Solutions (Social Work)

The outcomes system for Lasting Solutions is similar to the CLA. Information is gathered at the time of intake, contact during the case cycle and then at the end of the case to determine what benefit the client received from services. The outcomes system consists of five screens. The first screen tracks information regarding the relationship of the abuser and if any court documents were previously filed. The second screen basically documents if the client is in a safe place and further documents information regarding the abuser. Client's treatment history is gathered in the third screen. These three screens contain information that is gathered right after the acceptance of the case. The last two screens contain information that is gathered after the case. These screens gather information to determine what benefits the client obtained through services received.

Successful or Fruitful Intersections

The purpose of CLA's in-depth analysis is to help CLA identify any changes in program services delivery that are necessary, to identify larger systemic issues that need to be addressed in order to assist clients, to identify trends in needs within CLA's client population and to assist with grant application efforts.

Mortgage counseling hopes to review outcome data and use the information to improve the program. In theory the data should be used for this purpose. However, currently it is used to meet grant reporting requirements. With some refinements, this data will be used in long-range planning.

The Lasting Solution's outcome system is used to review the effectiveness of the project. The primary goal of Lasting Solutions project is to enable victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking to live safely and self-sufficiently as provided by civil court orders. Data used in this outcome measurement system is an indicator of how successful our clients are in breaking the cycle of violence. In addition, data is used to determine if any method used should be changed or reviewed.

Advice To Other Programs

As LSEM has continued with refining our outcome systems, it seems apparent that the system should allow for more than one "main benefit." It is difficult to neatly fit the outcome of a complex case into a single, narrowly defined main benefit category. For example, a client may come seeking to prevent eviction from his/her apartment. Although the client may ultimately lose the apartment, a variety of benefits were achieved for the client. The attorney may have bought the client some time to relocate, negotiated a neutral reference from the client's landlord, avoided or minimized a money judgment against the client, negotiated a payment plan for outstanding back rent, etc. These are all important outcomes that should be recorded, but are not. A single main benefit is chosen. Careful thought must be inputted into the process. Case handlers as well as other staff play an important part in the process.

However, the information gathered is not the only obstacle. Funding for the system as well as funding for adjustments and changes needed as the process develops is a great

determinant. Without adequate funding, the process will not proceed as quickly or as well as it

could.

Children's Legal Alliance Outcome System Screens – Attachment 1

Screen 1

◆ Detail

| BASELINE | SERVICES OBTAINED | CLOSING |

CASENUM   **BASELINE-REFERRING ISSUES**   EXIT

Interview Date: InterviewDate

| MENTAL HEALTH | EDUCATION | Brief Services ☑ |

☑ No MH Needs Identified
☑ Client indicate MH Needs
☑ Records indicate MH Needs
☑ Client Receiving MH
☑ No Interest MH
☑ NO MH Plan per CLA

☑ Not Enrolled in School
☑ Suspended
☑ Expelled
☑ Unidentified Spec. Ed.
☑ Spec. Ed. Insufficient
☑ Civil Rights
☑ Other Ed. Issues
☑ Truancy
☑ No Behavioral Issues
☑ No Attendance Issues

Other Ed.Issues Detail

EDOtherIssuesDetail

Screen 2

| BASELINE | SERVICES OBTAINED | CLOSING |

00-1000160   Closing Date: [   ]

EDUCATION	MENTAL HEALTH	COMMUNITY	FAMILY
☐ Enrolled in Program	☐ Medicaid/MC+cov.	☐ Obtained Tutoring	☐ Parents get MH Svcs.
☐ Obtained Evaluation	☐ Private Ins. cov.	☐ Religious Activities	☐ Siblings MH Svcs.
☐ Ident. Spec. Ed.	☐ Social Svc. Agency	☐ Obtained Job	☐ Family Econ Improved
☐ IEP Prepared	☐ DMH	☐ Summer Program	☐ Guardianship
☐ Change in IEP	☐ DFS	☐ After School	☐ Public Benefits
# of IEP's [ ]	☐ DYS	☐ Other Youth Program	☐ Legal Services Ref.
☐ Prevented Susp./ Exp.	☐ MO Alliance	☐ Mentoring Services	☐ Other
☐ Reduced Susp./ Exp.	☐ Family Court	☐ Other [ ]	[ ]
☐ Reversed Susp./ Exp.	☐ Psychiatric Services		☐ Case Management
☐ Compensatory Ed.	☐ Individual Therapy	SYSTEMIC	
☐ Pub. Alt. School	☐ Family Therapy	Mental Health	Education
☐ Contractual School	☐ Obtained Evaluation	☐ Prob. Acc. MC+	☐ Suspended Beyond 10 Days
☐ School Social Services	☐ In-Patient Treatment	☐ Prob. Acc. SMed.	☐ 10+ Beh. Ref./No Eval.
☐ Manifestations	☐ Medication	☐ -$ DFS	☐ No/Inad. Beh. Plan
# of Manifest. [ ]	☐ Family Support Plan	☐ -$ DMH	☐ School Not Imp. IEP
Other	☐ Other	☐ -$DYS	☐ Safe School Act, No Alt. Provided
☐ [ ]	☐ [ ]		☐ School Susp./Exp.; No Alt Provided
☐ No Pos Outcome Obtained			☐ No Approp. Voc. Program
COMMENTS: [ ]			

Screen 3

| BASELINE | SERVICES OBTAINED | CLOSING |

00-1000160

EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

Not In Study ☐

BASELINE(Sem. prior CLA)

☐ Enrolled in/comp. school program

0 / 0 Rate of Attendance #Num!

0 / # Classes Passed

0 # Beh. Reports

☐ CLBL Data Unavailable

RRD SEMESTER **1st FULL SEMESTER** **2ND FULL SEMESTER**

| | Open Date | | | | |
| RRD Date | | End Sem. Date | | End Sem. Date | |

☐ Enrolled in/comp. sch pgm   ☐ Enrolled in/comp. sch pgm   ☐ Enrolled in/comp. sch pgm

0 / 0 Rate of Attendance #Num!   0 / 0 Rate of Attendance #Num!   0 / 0 Rate of Attendance #Num!

0 / # Classes Passed   0 / # Classes Passed   0 / # Classes Passed

0 # Beh. Reports   0 # Beh. Reports   0 # Beh. Reports

☐ RRD Semester Data Unavailable ☐ Semester 1 Data Unavailable   ☐ Semester 2 Data Unavailable

EPComments:

HUD Counseling Outcome System Screens – Attachment 2

HUD ADDITIONAL DATA

[Save] [Exit]

CaseNum: `00E-1001678`

HOMEOWNERS	MORTGAGORS	POTENTIAL MORTGAGOR	RENTERS	POTENTIAL RENTERS	HOMELESS
☐ HECM	☐ HECM	☐ Purchased	☐ Purchased	☐ Purchased	☐ Transitional
☐ Rec'd Legl Srvs	☐ Current	☐ Not Purchase	☐ Alt Housing	☐ Rented Alt	☐ Emergency
☐ Other	☐ Forbearance	☐ Rec'd Legl Srvs	☐ Retain Housing	☐ Rec'd Legl Srvs	☐ Handicapped
	☐ HUD	☐ Other	☐ Rec'd Legl Srvs	☐ Other	☐ Traditional
	☐ Deed-in-lieu		☐ Other		☐ Rec'd Legl Srvs
	☐ Sold				☐ Other
	☐ Foreclosed				
	☐ Rented Alt.				
	☑ Rec'd Legal Srvs				
	☐ Other				

Lasting Solutions (Social Work) Outcome System Screens – Attachment 3

Screen 1

| Enter Case Number(Search): | | | Quit |

Save Record

PRE1 | PRE2 | PRE3 | POST1 | POST2

Case Number

Relationship:
Time Lived Together:
Time Lived Together Married:

Filed/Served — **Previously**

	Filed/Served	Previously
OP Adult:	▣	▣
OP Child:	▣	▣
OP Petitioner:	▣	▣
OP Respondent:	▣	▣
OP Divorce:	▣	▣
OP Modification:	▣	▣
OP Paternity:	▣	▣
OP Habeas Corpus:	▣	▣
OP Other:		

Previous action against same person? ▣

If previous action NOT against same person, then whom?

Screen 2

| Enter Case Number(Search): | | | Quit |

Save Record

PRE1 | PRE2 | PRE3 | POST1 | POST2

SAFETY

Safe Now: ▣
Safety Plan: ▣
How Violent Now: [▾]
Safety Options: ▣
Describe Safety Plan:

What Services are you accessing now?

Counseling: ▣
Housing Assistance: ▣
Job Training/Educ: ▣
TANF/SSI: ▣
Other:

Phys Violence Increased: ▣	He Threat/Attempt Suicide: ▣	He uses Drugs/Alchohol: ▣
He Violent Outside Home: ▣	You Contemplated Suicide: ▣	If yes, what kind and how frequently
He ControlS Your Activities: ▣	You Have Children: ▣	
He Stalks You: ▣	He Hurt/Threatened Children: ▣	You use Drugs/Alchohol: ▣
He Threatened to Kill You: ▣	Children witness abuse: ▣	If yes, what kind and how frequently
Weapon Used/Threatened: ▣		
He Capable of Killing You: ▣		

Screen 3

Enter Case Number(Search):   Quit

Save Record

PRE1 | PRE2 | PRE3 | POST1 | POST2

TREATMENT

Been Treated: Date Last Treatment:

How Often Have You Been Getting Treatments:

Currently Receiving Treatments:

Access to Money:
Place to Live:

Where are you Living:

What Support Systems do you have:

What are Your Goals:

Screen 4

Enter Case Number(Search):   Quit

Save Record

PRE1 | PRE2 | PRE3 | POST1 | POST2

Please Enter Description of OTHER assistance

Required Legal Assistance:

Were You Successful in Those Proceedings?

How Quickly were you contacted:

Member of Client Svcs Discuss Safety Plan:

Life More Secure and Less Violent:

What Services Were Offered To You?

Counseling:
Housing:
Work/Job Training:
Emotional Support During Court Proc:
TANF/SSI, etc:
Other:

Satisfied With Services?

What Was The Most Helpful Service?

Legal Help:
Phone Calls:
Letters Sent:
Refferals:
Support:
Other:

Screen 5

Enter Case Number(Search):   Quit

Save Record

PRE1 | PRE2 | PRE3 | POST1 | POST2

Is There Something Else That We Could Have Done For You?

Other Comments: